

Israel Update: Bush In Israel

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By David Dolan

SHALOM FROM JERUSALEM,

It's a sunny, if cold, Friday here, following several days of much needed rain and fog that obscured President George W. Bush's view of the Old City and other historic sites from his nearby King David hotel room. But he got his wish to see a stirring sunrise this morning!

Below is my latest commentary for the World Net Daily web site, published there today. It naturally concerns the American leader's current visit here, and especially his call for a Palestinian state to arise during 2008. I hope you like it.

WorldNetDaily Exclusive Commentary

What Hope For A Peace Treaty?

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George W. Bush told reporters in Ramallah yesterday that he believes a final Israeli-Palestinian peace accord will be signed and sealed before he leaves office in 12 months time. As one of my Israeli friends put it, if that proves to be the case, it will surely be because of the miraculous intervention of the Middle East Tooth Fairy working hand in glove with Santa Claus.



David Dolan

It has been nearly a decade since an American president visited Israel and nearby Palestinian-controlled territory. Although Bill Clinton stopped here several times during his eight years in office, his Republican successor waited until his final stretch to do the same thing. That's probably because when Bush took his initial oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution in January 2001, Israel was already engulfed in a violent Palestinian terror onslaught that followed the total collapse of the Clinton-backed Oslo peace process six months earlier.

The lame duck American leader – who most Palestinians think is just lame, if not evil, and most Israelis say is fairly ducky, if rather naïve – came to Israel in an attempt to keep the momentum going from his late November Annapolis peace summit. He might as well be paddling up Niagara Falls with a pitchfork.

Most Israeli pundits and politicians are still scratching their heads trying to figure out why the American president and his Israeli counterpart, Prime

Minister Ehud Olmert, think this is even a remotely possible time to finally resolve the core components of the long and bitter Arab-Israeli conflict.

Scraping the bottom in all local opinion polls, the Israeli leader is facing the imminent release of a government authorized commission report that will critique how he conducted the 2006 summer war against radical Hezbollah forces in Lebanon. Everyone already knows it will hardly be flattering, and maybe outright damning, and could cause his five party government coalition to collapse. That alone distances him from the late Yitzhak Rabin, a highly popular war hero turned politician who nevertheless barely persuaded a majority of Israeli legislators to endorse the Oslo accords in the 1990s.

On the other side of the negotiating table, Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas is under grave threat from the Iran-Hezbollah-Syria supported Hamas movement, which staged a bloody coup against his corrupt government and security forces in the Gaza Strip only last June. Some Palestinian officials admit that Abbas would not be able to cling to power at all in Jordan's former West Bank if Jewish soldiers were not regularly operating against the manifold Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters and terror cells based there.

And yet, as part of any final peace settlement, such soldiers would presumably be withdrawn from their outposts, along with hundreds of thousands of Jews living in areas that the Palestinians want to make *judenrind* once again. Who will keep the Muslim militants at bay then?

The prospect of Hamas seizing control of the Palestinian state that President Bush is currently touting is naturally harrowing to most Israelis. Even if Gaza were left out of the equation for now, such a state would rise just miles from the heavily populated Israeli coastal plane, and along the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, if not actually inside eastern portions of the hotly contested holy city, including the Temple Mount.

Ever since the extremist Sunni Muslim group triumphed over American-trained and equipped PA security forces in Gaza last June, the number of Palestinian rocket and mortar attacks upon nearby Israeli civilian centers has sharply escalated. Just before Bush arrived here, a mid-range Katyusha rocket – the same kind Hezbollah poured upon northern Israel in 2006 – landed for the first time on the northern edge of the large coastal city of Ashkelon, some ten miles north of the Gaza Strip. The city of Ashdod, hosting one of Israel's two main ports, lies just a few miles to the north of where the Grad rocket exploded, and the Tel Aviv metropolis is a mere 20 miles beyond that.

Two other Katyusha rockets hit an Israel town just prior to the President's

first official visit to Israel – this time fired from Lebanon. That was just a slight reminder that not only will a peace accord between Abbas and Olmert prove meaningless until Hamas is fully dealt with, but also not before Iranian-backed Hezbollah militiamen and Palestinian jihad warriors based in southern Lebanon are somehow neutralized.

An unprecedented 19 Palestinian rockets and mortar shells were fired from inside Gaza's sealed borders at nearby Israeli targets the morning Dubya landed at Ben Gurion airport, located just 35 miles northeast of the crowded Hamas-ruled coastal zone. If the anti-peace Sunni Arab movement gains control over a Bush-advocated Palestinian state within binocular range of Israel's capital complex in central Jerusalem as well, it will obviously be another huge feather for Osama bin Laden's jihad turban. Shiite Iran – busy enriching uranium for purely peaceful purposes, ya sure – will be pretty pleased as well.

Israeli security officials point out with appropriate alarm that ever since Muslim gunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip last year, Hamas leaders have been busy transforming their rogue guerilla forces into a highly trained army. The Shin Bet security service says the Palestinians have smuggled hundreds of anti-tank and aircraft missiles along with over 130 tons of explosives into the zone since Ariel Sharon, with George Bush's brawny encouragement, yanked Israeli soldiers and civilians out of the area in the summer of 2005. However most of the contraband, some 80 tons, has arrived since the violent Hamas takeover last June, mostly via illicit tunnels dug below the southern border with Egypt.

The facts on the ground seem to abundantly proclaim that any final U.S.-backed peace accord that helps create a Palestinian state inside Judaism's biblical heartland and the Gaza Strip will not be achievable, let alone viable, until the Tehran-led jihad axis of evil is dealt with. Not a few Israelis hope that is the real reason for the president's current Middle East jaunt – preparing the ground for a military assault on nuclear-arming Iran, which would certainly help render its regional Muslim surrogates mere toothless fairies.